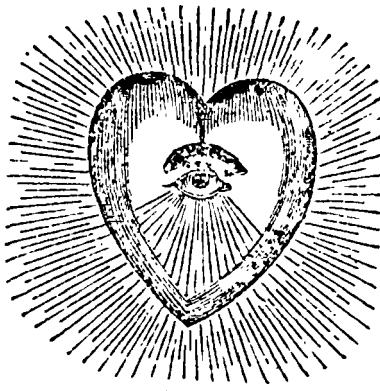


# THE



# SEER.

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All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth. See Ye, when He lifteth up an Ensign on the Mountains.—*Isaiah* XVIII, 3.

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## FAITH IS THE GIFT OF GOD.

BY THE EDITOR.

Faith is the gift of God. In what manner does God give faith? Does he impart this gift to the mind by the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit independent of any other means? Does he bestow it unsought for and irrespective of the preparation of the mind? Does he confer it independent of the agency of man? To say that man obtains this gift without preparing himself, or without the exercise of any agency, is to deprive him of all responsibility in regard to whether he has faith or not. This condition would free him from all blame or condemnation for unbelief. If agency is in no way concerned in obtaining faith, it would be the highest act of injustice to punish the unbeliever: there would be no more responsibility about him than there is about the dumb brute. What would be thought of the justice of a man who would punish his horse because he was not harnessed? If the animal were endowed with the power of speech, would he not say, that he was an irresponsible being, that he had no power or agency to harness himself, that the gift of harnessing belonged to a higher and superior being to himself, and that he considered it very cruel, and unjust, and tyrannical for that higher being to punish him for not exercising a faculty with which he was not endowed, which was far beyond his capacities, and which was

a condition that man alone was capable of bestowing? If faith is the gift of God, and man has no agency in obtaining this gift, then he stands in the same relation to God in regard to having faith, as the horse does to the man in regard to being harnessed: and if it would be unjust and cruel in man to punish his horse for not being harnessed, it would be equally unjust and cruel for God to punish man for not having faith, if he be considered a being incapable of the exercise of such a faculty.

That faith is the gift of God there is no dispute; but that God bestows this gift unsought for, and without any preparation or agency on the part of man, is not only unscriptural and unreasonable, but extremely absurd, when we consider that man is to be punished for his unbelief. But some may inquire, has not God the power and right to do with man as He pleases? Has not He power to withhold faith, and punish whomsoever He will, whether they deserve it or not? We reply, that whatever power God has, it is certain that He will not exercise it contrary to the principles of Justice and Mercy, or contrary to the revealed character, which He has given of Himself. If it were possible for Him to change, or deviate from His word, then He would cease to be God. If He would punish the innocent and acquit the guilty, He would be a Being

altogether unlovely and undesirable—a Being to be feared, but not to be loved. Therefore, we may rest assured that he will never punish a man for his unbelief, unless man has the power to obtain faith through the exercise of his own free will.

But if faith cannot be obtained, unless sought for properly, how can the sayings of Paul to the Ephesians be reconciled with this idea? “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” (Eph. 2: 8—10.) We are to understand from these passages, that the grace and faith by which man is saved, are the gifts of God, having been purchased for him not by his own works, but by the blood of Christ. Had not these gifts been purchased for man, all exertions on his part would have been entirely unavailing and fruitless. Whatever course man might have pursued, he could not have atoned for one sin; it required the sacrifice of a sinless and pure Being in order to purchase the gifts of faith, repentance, and salvation for fallen man. Grace, Faith, Repentance, and Salvation, when considered in their origin, are not of man, neither by his works: man did not devise, originate, nor adopt them; superior Beings in the Celestial abodes, provided these gifts, and revealed the conditions to man by which he might become a partaker of them. Therefore all boasting on the part of man is excluded. He is saved by a plan which his works did not originate—a plan of heaven, and not of earth.

Well might the Apostle declare to the Ephesians, that these gifts were not of themselves, neither of their works, when the God and Father of our spirits, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, was the great Author of them. But are these great gifts bestowed on fallen man without his works? No: man has these gifts purchased for and offered to him; but

before he can receive and enjoy them, he must exercise his agency and accept of them: and herein is the condemnation of man, because when he was in a helpless fallen condition, and could not by his own works and devices atone for the least of his sins, the only Begotten of the Father gave his own life to purchase the gifts of faith and salvation for him, and yet he will not so much as accept of them.

Faith therefore is the gift of God, but man cannot have this choice heavenly treasure only in God's own appointed way. Among the means that God has ordained through which man may receive this great and precious gift, may be mentioned, the preaching of the word by men called and inspired by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost: for saith the apostle, “How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?” “So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. 10: 14, 15, 17.) Though faith be the gift of God, yet it comes by hearing the word. Through this medium man makes himself acquainted with the evidence in favor of the divinity of the word; the evidence being of divine origin as well as the word. This evidence begets faith in the mind; and this faith, though it be obtained through the exercise of the free will and agency of the creature, is still the gift of God, granted through the evidence accompanying the preached word. In the apostles' days, when the art of printing was unknown, and the great majority of mankind could not read the word, the principal means of obtaining faith was by the process of preaching and hearing, but in these days, in many instances, faith comes, by reading as well as by preaching: for a man called and inspired of God can both preach and write by the power of the Holy Ghost; and when the honest humble soul either hears or reads that which is given by the Spirit, the light that is in

him witnesseth that it is of God; for light cleaves to light, and truth to truth; the Spirit gives light to every man that comes into the world, and if he loves the light that is in himself, he will love all other light that is presented to his mind, and embrace it. Light cannot be presented to the mind of a candid, honest person, without being perceived to be light; but if he receive it not, he extinguishes in a degree the light that is in him, and darkness still greater ensues, and he is left to commit evils of a greater magnitude, until the light that was in him has entirely fled, and darkness reigns triumphantly: this darkness brings misery and wretchedness in this world and eternal torment in the world to come. This is the state of man who rejects light and truth, and will not exercise faith in that which the light that is in him teaches him is true.

The word and the evidence accompanying it are both the gifts of God; but besides these, the light that is in every man who comes into the world is also the gift of God through Christ. For if Christ had not purchased this gift for man by his atoning blood, man would have been destitute of all light. Darkness alone would have reigned, and our world would have been a hell—the miserable abode of fallen spirits and fallen man: no ray of light could have penetrated the darkened understanding: the extreme of misery would have been the result. But saith our Saviour, “I am the light and the life of the world;” all light that is in the world came by him through his atonement; it is the gift of God to fallen man. If the light that is in man be the gift of God, surely all additional light offered to him, must be the gift of God also. By faith man should lay hold of this light, wherever he may discover it.

The only way to receive additional faith and light is to practice according to the light which we have: and if we do this, we have the promise of God that the same shall grow brighter and brighter until the perfect day.

Every word of God is light and truth. He that saith, that he is in the light, but obeyeth not the words of truth, is deceiving himself, and is in darkness; for none are the children of faith except such as walk in the light, and obey its laws. How many millions in Christendom profess to be christians and say that they are in the light and have been born of God, and yet they have never obeyed even the first principles of the light; they have never repented properly, and been immersed in water for the remission of sins by the ministration of one whom God has authorized; and yet they pretend that God for Christ's sake has forgiven their sins. How blindly deceived! and how vain their faith and hope of salvation! God has not forgiven their sins; neither will he forgive them, until they obey the message of the gospel, according to the precise order which he has revealed. Faith is the gift of God and is one of the means of salvation; but none can have this gift except in the way that God has ordained: and all who pretend to have faith, and obey not that form of doctrine which God has revealed, will find that their faith is of no effect, and that they will be damned with unbelievers: for God will not confer saving gifts upon the disobedient.

Every thing that is good comes from God and is the gift of God. God has given revelation upon revelation unto man for his benefit; and the generations to whom he has given his word will be judged by that word at the last day. God raised up a prophet in our day, and gave him the Urim and Thummim, and revealed a flood of light and truth through him to this generation. This generation will be judged out of the books and revelations which God gave through this prophet. If they exercise faith in these revelations, and obey the same, they will be justified and saved; but if they disbelieve them, and harden their hearts against them, they will surely be damned; for the Almighty reveals not his word in vain. What doth it benefit this

generation to offer them a heavenly gift, and reveal to them more light and truth if they receive it not? The gift benefits those only who receive it. The rest will receive a greater condemnation. When the honest read that heavenly treasure—the Book of Mormon, they are filled with joy unspeakable, because God has again spoken to man as in ancient times; their souls feast upon the contents of that holy and divine book; and so great is their joy, that they cannot find language adequate to express the overflowings of their hearts. But how different are the feelings of those who reject it: light and truth flee from them, and they feel angry to think that God should again speak to man. But God will show them by his Almighty power that his word cannot be rejected with impunity.—The judgments that have befallen ancient generations and nations who have rejected his word, ought to be a solemn warning to those now on the earth. But alas! the pride, high-mindedness, and great wickedness of man cause him to hate the light because his deeds are evil. And thus this generation will, for the most part, perish in unbelief and disobedience to one of the greatest and most important messages that God ever sent for the salvation of the people. Oh, poor fallen man! how eager for happiness, and yet how unwilling to receive it upon righteous principles! Oh, that thou didst but know the day of thy visitation, and wouldst incline thine ear, and hearken to the voice of God and harden not thy heart, for then it would be well with thee! But thou knowest not, neither dost thou consider the fearful judgments that await thee, if thou turnest a deaf ear to the last great message of mercy, now revealed from the heavens for thy good! Oh, turn unto the Lord, and exercise faith in him, that your light and joy may be increased—your faith and love become perfected, that all of the gifts of God may abound in you, that you may finally obtain eternal life, which is the greatest of all the gifts of God to man.

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## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON DOCTRINE.

BY THE EDITOR.

*Question.* Does the Book of Mormon agree with the Bible?

*Answer.* Both books being of Divine origin, they will of course agree; for God never disagrees with himself; and His words spoken in ancient America are just as true as His words, spoken in ancient Palestine.

*Q.* Does the Book of Mormon contain any additional light not contained in the Bible?

*A.* The whole volume, without exception to any of its parts, contains additional light and truth. Whether considered in its historical, prophetic, or doctrinal character, it is one of the most wonderful and important books of which the world has any knowledge. Were it not for this choice and invaluable work, the his-

tory of the ancient nations who once peopled this vast continent, would have slumbered in perpetual darkness: all efforts to have penetrated the mists of antiquity would have been in vain. The magnificent ruins of ancient cities, palaces, and temples, buried in primeval forests, would alone have proclaimed in silent grandeur, the strength and greatness of the former population. The Book of Mormon, then, as an ancient history, and the *only* history which we have of ancient America, is of priceless value—a gem most precious. A book is valuable in proportion to the importance and greatness of the truths which it unfolds; and this value is infinitely increased, when it is known that it is the only source of informa-

tion upon the subject. That which greatly enhances the value of this ancient history is the fact of its being *sacred*. There are many histories of the ancient nations of the eastern continent, but they are full of contradictions and absurdities, and cannot in many things be depended on. The historian, in his researches into the remote ages of antiquity, is frequently guided by speculation and conjecture. These defects render some histories of less value than others whose veracity is undoubted. The Book of Mormon being a sacred history, its declarations can be depended on: and when we read the doings of by-gone ages, we know that we have no speculation or conjecture of the historian to blind and bewilder the understanding. Every event is accurately described: every word is truth; and we feast our minds with certainty and knowledge.

**Q.** But what benefit is Sacred History in relation to the salvation of man?

**A.** By sacred history we learn the dealings of God with nations, generations, and individuals: we perceive the prosperity that attends the righteous, and the judgments that befall the wicked. All these things are encouragements and warnings to us, and calculated to lead us in the steps of righteousness, and cause us to shun the paths of evil.

**Q.** Is there any benefit to be derived from the prophetic and doctrinal portions of the Book of Mormon?

**A.** Yes: in this respect, the book is infinitely more valuable than all other books in the world written by human wisdom. The doctrines and prophecies, contained in it, are so very definite, pointed, and plain, that no ambiguity or uncertainty is left upon the mind in regard to the way of salvation, and the events that are to transpire so far as they are predicted.

**Q.** But is not the Jewish Record or the Bible equally as plain?

**A.** No: it no doubt was once just as plain and definite as the sacred Scriptures given in Ancient America.

But the Bible has been robbed of its plainness; many sacred books having been lost, others rejected by the Romish Church, and what few we have left, were copied and re-copied so many times, that it is admitted that almost every verse has been corrupted and mutilated to that degree that scarcely any two of them read alike. The original manuscripts of the books of the Old and New Testaments are no where to be found; all we have left are mutilated copies containing an incredible number of contradictory readings. From these, uninspired men have translated by their own human wisdom our present version of the Bible, which is so indefinite that it leaves room for different opinions, clashing one against the other; hence there has arisen a vast number of sects contending about the true points of Christ's doctrine. The first thing, therefore, necessary to the re-establishment of the kingdom of Christ on the earth, was to reveal in perfect plainness the exact and precise principles of the gospel in all their fullness; this was accomplished in the remarkable discovery and translation of the sacred records of Ancient America.

**Q.** Did the revelation and translation of the book of Mormon authorize Joseph Smith to officiate in gospel ordinances?

**A.** No: God sent an holy angel, whose name was John (the Baptist) to confer upon him and upon another young man whose name was Oliver Cowdery, authority to baptize for the remission of sins.

**Q.** Did this authority extend to the ordinance of Confirmation, or the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost?

**A.** No: John could not baptize with the Holy Ghost; he was only authorized to baptize with water, and he could not confer authority upon others which he himself did not hold.

**Q.** How did Joseph Smith obtain the office of an apostle?

**A.** Peter, James, and John were sent to him, by whom he was ordained to the apostleship, and thus authorized to lay on hands upon baptized believ-

ers for the gift of the Holy Ghost, and to minister in all other gospel ordinances.

*Q.* Who were the first ones that were legally baptized after the restoration of the authority!

*A.* Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. After John the Baptist had laid his hands upon these young men and ordained them, he commanded them to baptize each other, which they accordingly did, agreeably to the pattern given in the book of Mormon. And after having received the office of the apostleship, they confirmed each other by the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. They were also commanded to ordain each other as a pattern for future ordinations.

*Q.* Was not the ordination which they received under the hands of John sufficient, without their being commanded to re-ordain each other?

*A.* It was necessary for them to set a perfect example for others to follow. Though the ordination which the angel had conferred upon them, gave authority, yet, as it was conferred previous to their baptism; it was necessary for them to be re-ordained after their baptism, as a pattern for the ordination of all future officers in the Church, lest some, in after times, should venture to ordain unbaptized persons, which the Lord did not intend, after the church was once restored, to sanction. This is the cause why the angel commanded a re-ordination after their baptism. In the restoration of authority the angel had a right to confer ordination before baptism, otherwise their baptism of each other would have been illegal and of no more effect than the baptisms of the apostate churches of Christendom. But when the authority was once restored, and baptism was legally administered, there existed no more necessity for ordination previous to baptism. Ordination henceforth, could only be bestowed upon baptized persons, and it was the will of the Lord that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery should be the two highly favored individuals who should first set the example in all these holy ordinances.

*Q.* Did God give any further instructions preparatory to the re-organization of His Church on the earth?

*A.* Yes: He gave many revelations and commandments to Joseph Smith, setting forth the true order, rules, and regulations to be observed. He also sent an holy angel from heaven in open day, in the presence of three other individuals, namely, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris, who were in company with Joseph Smith, praying in the fields. These four men saw the angel descend from heaven, clothed in glory; they saw the plates of gold containing the writings of the ancient prophets of America in his hands; they saw him turn over the leaves, and beheld the engravings thereon; they heard his voice as he conversed with them face to face: they also heard the voice of the Lord, at the same time speaking out of the heavens, declaring to them that the unsealed portions of the plates had been translated correctly by Joseph Smith, and commanding them to bear testimony of what they then saw and heard to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, to whom the translation should be sent. In accordance with these sacred injunctions, they have sent forth their printed testimony in connection with the translation, called the Book of Mormon. These were some of the great preparatory events, preceding the organization of the Church of God again upon our earth. After the way was fully prepared, the kingdom of God was set up, consisting of only six members.

*Q.* Did Joseph the prophet receive any further instructions concerning the kingdom after its restoration?

*A.* Yes: God continued to give line upon line, precept upon precept, year after year, to govern, and set in order, and regulate all things pertaining to the church, that it might grow, and flourish, and increase in heavenly gifts, and be prepared to accomplish His righteous purposes.

*Q.* What purposes are to be accomplished through the medium of this church?

*A.* First: God will send His faithful servants in this church to every nation under heaven to preach the gospel as a witness and a sign of the second coming of His Son from the heavens, to destroy the wicked and to reign with His saints on the earth. Secondly: God will, through his servants, gather out the righteous from among all nations, and assemble them in one; and they will be armed with righteousness and with the power of God in great glory. Thirdly: God will enlarge the borders of His people, and increase their dominion until the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heavens shall be given into their hands. Lastly: God will destroy every nation under heaven that will not obey the fullness of His gospel and become subject to the laws of His kingdom.

*Q.* What does the Lord require of the people of the United States?

*A.* He requires them to repent of all their sins and embrace the message of salvation, contained in the Book of Mormon, and be baptized into this church, and prepare themselves for the coming of the Lord.

*Q.* What will be the consequence if they do not embrace the Book of Mormon as a divine revelation?

*A.* They will be destroyed from the land and sent down to hell, like all other generations who have rejected a divine message.

*Q.* In what way will the Lord destroy this nation if they reject the Book of Mormon?

*A.* By a succession of the most terrible judgments. Plague will follow plague in rapid succession, desolating populous cities and destroying hundreds of thousands. The rains of heaven will be staid, and the earth will not yield forth her wonted harvests, and thousands will pine away with hunger and perish. The bonds of the Union which now hold together the States of this Republic, will be severed, and a fearful, desolating, civil war will rage between the South and the North. The people then will no longer dwell upon their farms, and in their villages,

and cities with security, but they will flee from city to city, and from State to State before the face of their enemies, and fear and terror will be upon them by day and night. The laws of the land will then be powerless, and the people will no longer be under their wholesome influence; bands of robbers and murderers will wander over the land unrestrained, and thus will the whole nation mourn and waste away and perish, unless they will hearken unto the great message which God has in mercy sent to them. There is no other alternative; they must either embrace the Book of Mormon as a divine revelation, or be cut off by judgments from the land, for it is the sure and certain decree of heaven. God is not to be mocked, neither can a message be rejected from Him with impunity. Now is the day of mercy; now peace dwells within your borders; now the proclamation is repent and come forth with humble hearts and contrite spirits and be baptized for the remission of sins, that you may receive the Holy Ghost. If this proclamation is unheeded, the sword of justice, which is already unsheathed, will fall heavily upon you. Do not flatter yourselves that you will escape, nor suffer yourselves, for a moment, to suppose that all is well, for the decrees of the Eternal must be fulfilled, and this land must be cleansed from wickedness.

*Q.* But will the Lord destroy the righteous with the wicked in the day when he executes fierce judgment upon the nation?

*A.* No: the righteous will take warning and flee to the mountains and vales of Utah, that they may escape these sore calamities; but even they will be visited with great tribulation, unless they give the most earnest and diligent heed to the Book of Mormon, and to the other commandments and revelations which God has given or shall hereafter give to them. The wise will foresee the evil and hide themselves; but the wicked will be caught in their own snares, and fall into their own pits.

## EDITORIAL.

STATISTICS OF UTAH TERRITORY, as reported by the Bishops, Oct. 16th, 1853,—

Total number of inhabitants,	18,206
Persons on Missions,	139
Births during the year, ending	
October 6th, 1853,	904
Deaths do do do	253

We presume that the total number of inhabitants reported, does not include the emigration to that territory, during the year 1853. It is also presumable that the territory was only partially reported.

SANDWICH ISLANDS.—The gospel on those islands is spreading rapidly: from April 6th to July 25th the church was increased by the addition of about 1,000 souls. The translation of the Book of Mormon into the Hawaiian language is completed and ready for the press.

CHINA.—Our Missionaries to the celestial empire have returned. No opportunity for the introduction of the gospel among them at present. Wars and other judgments will, no doubt, eventually prepare the way, so that the kingdom of God may be established in their midst, and the honest humble seekers after truth, enter therein, and, in due time, be gathered to Zion: for thus saith the Lord, by the mouth of Joseph the prophet, "And it shall come to pass, among the wicked, that every man that will not take his sword against his neighbor, must needs flee unto Zion for safety. And there shall be gathered unto it out of every nation under heaven; and it shall be the only people that shall not be at war one with another." (Doc. & Cov. Sec. 15: 13.) In this general emigration of the saints from all nations, China must contribute her portion: songs of praise and gladness in the Chinese language, will yet be heard among the congregations

of Zion. The word of the Lord shall be fulfilled in its time and in its season.

SAN BERNARDINO, CALIFORNIA.—The country of San Bernardino is inhabited by the saints: it is in the southern part of California, and extends from the south-western part of Utah, to within 25 or 30 miles of the Pacific ocean. There are three saw mills and one flouring mill in the settlement. They are entitled to one State Representative. The colony is in a flourishing condition under the presidency of Amasa Lyman and Charles C. Rich, two of the twelve.

NEW WORK.—"JOSEPH SMITH THE PROPHET." This is the title of a very interesting work, written by the direction, and under the immediate inspection of the Prophet himself. It is now, for the first time, printed. It contains the genealogy and a brief sketch of his ancestors back for six or seven generations. Several remarkable dreams and visions of his father are related. But what renders the work doubly interesting is the early history of the Prophet, including many remarkable occurrences and important facts, never before published. Copies of this work would be valuable to every lover of truth, and would adorn the libraries of the honest and patriotic descendants of our pilgrim fathers, who will be pleased to learn that one of the greatest and most renowned Prophets that ever graced our earth, descended from that hardy illustrious race who first peopled the dense forests of New England, and formed the nucleus of a great and independent nation of freemen. We have on hand a few copies, procured from England, printed on superior paper, and bound in the most superior style of morocco, neatly gilted. Price \$2; common paper, calf \$1 50; Roan, \$1.



"MILLENNIAL STAR."—This is the title of a weekly periodical of sixteen pages, published by the Latter-Day Saints at 15 Wilton street, Liverpool, England. This much esteemed and highly interesting periodical has been published for many years; fifteen volumes have been completed. In the British Isles, it has a circulation of about twenty thousand: it is also extensively circulated in Europe, Asia, Australia, Pacific Islands, and America. Its columns embrace the general history of the Church of the Latter-Day Saints from its rise, together with the interesting news from our missionaries among all nations; they are also interspersed with many articles on prophecy and doctrine, opening the grand events of futurity, and elucidating the principles of salvation, with a clearness which, at once, shows that they are the productions, not of human wisdom, but of the wisdom of God. The saints who wish to inform themselves of the rapid spread of the gospel, and upon every other useful subject, connected with the great Latter-Day Dispensation in which they live, should without fail procure the volumes of the Star, and they will have a continual feast. We have volumes 11, 13, 14, and 15 on hand for sale. Prices as mentioned in the Catalogue, except vol. 14, which contains 44 Nos. and supplement, for \$2, or \$2 20 including postage pre-paid by us. Will the saints be indifferent about procuring these most valuable publications? Will they grope in darkness when light of the most pure and heavenly nature is within their reach? Will they plead poverty, as an excuse for depriving themselves and their children of blessings that would be of more value to them than any earthly consideration? Would it not be much better to dispense for a while with some of the luxuries of life, and thus save a little means to procure heavenly light and truth, than to live in ignorance of what God is doing through His people? Would it not be more God-like to dispense with that nauseous and disgusting habit of chewing and smoking to-

bacco, and by that means not only save your health and constitution, but save funds to purchase a far more healthy and durable food upon which you can feast your minds both in time and in eternity? Or will you lie down and grovel in ignorance like the natural brute beast, and yet profess to be Saints? Will you, not only curse yourselves with blindness and darkness, but entail the same upon your children and upon your generations after you? How can you be the children of light, when light shines all around you, and yet you perceive it not? One Presiding Elder over a branch of forty professed Saints in North Carolina writes that he had heard nothing of the saints since they were driven from Nauvoo. Now, if he had been in China, in Australia, or in the Pacific Isles, he would have obtained an abundance of news concerning them; but it seems that some impenetrable barrier down south has shut out all light and information for these many years; it must be a dismal place, indeed! We can think of nothing to compare with it only the old antediluvian prison where no heavenly light or information burst in upon them for the long dreary period of two thousand years and upwards. How long it will be before the prison doors down south will be opened, we know not. There possibly may be some chance for them at the close of the Millennium.

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APPOINTMENT. Elder James Brown is hereby appointed Emigration Agent for the Saints at New Orleans. He is requested to go immediately to that city, so as to be there in time to make preparations for the ships, filled with the emigrating Saints from Liverpool. The most of these ships will most probably arrive between the middle of February and the middle of May. Elder Brown has been laboring in the ministry with some success in Indiana, and we trust his active business turn of mind will prove a blessing to the emigrating Saints, and save them much expense and trouble. Brother Brown will open a correspondence with S.

W. Richards, our agent at Liverpool, which will be a help to him in making every necessary arrangement.

ORSON PRATT,

President of the Saints in the  
U. S. and British Provinces.]

## REPENTANCE.

BY THE EDITOR.

REPENTANCE is one of the conditions granted to fallen man, through which he is made a partaker of the purchased gift and blessings of salvation. Repentance is a sorrow of heart for all past sins committed, and a full confession unto the Lord of the same, connected with a covenant or promise, and a fixed settled determination in the mind, to sin no more. Repentance may be considered under the following four heads :

*First.* The evils and sins to be repented of.

*Second.* The nature of the sorrow connected with true repentance.

*Third.* The confession necessary for the penitent.

*Fourth.* The promise and determination to sin no more.

We shall examine, First, *The evils and sins to be repented of.* Before any one can repent, he must be convinced of sin. Sin is a transgression of the law. Without a knowledge of the law, a person cannot always discern between good and sinful actions. The light that is in every man which comes into the world, will enable him, without the aid of the revealed law, to distinguish in some small degree, between good and evil. But there are many evils that could not be known short of the revealed law. The light of conscience will make manifest some of the more glaring evils : but this light becomes greatly obscured by neglect and by constant violation of its teachings, so much so, that persons may become almost or wholly insensitive to the dictates of conscience : many actions which were once considered evils will, by constant habit, be considered virtuous ;

while many practices once considered good, will by tradition and habit be transformed into evils. A heathen entirely unacquainted with the revealed law, would, if he were always to follow the still small voice of conscience, receive more and more light, and be able to discover many important truths, and to distinguish between virtue and vice more clearly than those who are constantly violating the monitor within them. But with all the light that he could glean, independent of revelation, he would be far from understanding the sinfulness of many actions, and would be entirely ignorant of the nature of others in regard to whether they were sinful or not : and he would also be wholly uninformed in regard to a future judgment and the penalties to be inflicted upon sinners ; and without a knowledge of these things he could not repent acceptably as the gospel requires.

It is therefore, by the revealed law, that we become acquainted with good and evil more fully ; and by which we learn that we are accountable beings, and must be judged by the law for our doings, and that the penalty of the law must be executed upon us, if we have transgressed it, in order to satisfy the demands of justice, unless we have complied with the conditions through which mercy may have claim upon us, and may deliver us from the justice of the law. Paul says, "I had not known sin but by the law : for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet," (Rom. 7: 7.) Without the law, conscience does not teach us that to labor on the Sabbath day is

sinful. There is no process of reasoning that will teach a heathen that labor on the Sabbath is any more sinful, than labor performed on Monday, or Tuesday, or any other day of the week. It is by the revealed law, and not by conscience, that this sin is discovered. Conscience may teach the heathen that to murder is an evil, and human laws may teach them that death shall be the punishment of the murderer. Through fears of the penalties of the law and the evils resulting in this life, they refrain in a great measure from committing this crime; but they have no knowledge of the higher law against murder, nor of the greater penalty which will be inflicted upon the murderer beyond this life; they have no knowledge of a higher Being who will call them to account for that crime. If, therefore, they should repent of murder, it would not be for the purpose of escaping the penalty in the next life, nor for the purpose of pleasing God, of whose laws they know nothing, but for the purpose of avoiding the evils resulting in this present world. Such repentance, though good as far as it goes, is not that which the gospel requires; it is not repentance towards God, but it is a repentance towards man, in order to please man, and to avoid the penalty of man's laws.

There are many among the heathen who commit adultery and fornication; conscience does not tell them that God is displeased with these evils; indeed, some of them do not consider these to be evils, and have no more remorse of conscience in doing them, than they would have in eating when they were hungry. But when they learn the law of God, they discover that these are great evils, and that the punishments to be inflicted in the next life for these sins, are of the most fearful nature. Without the law, they consider that all is well; but when the law is made known, they find themselves transgressors. As the apostle Paul says, "Without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

And the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me. Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." (Romans 7: 8—13.)

Where there is no knowledge of the revealed law of God, sinful actions will not be punished to the same extent as where the laws and their penalties are known; for the apostle says, "Sin is not imputed when there is no law." (Rom. 5: 13.) That is, sin is not imputed to the same extent, and they are not punished with the same severity, as those who are acquainted with the law. Hence, the Saviour declares that he who knoweth the master's will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes; while he that knoweth not, and yet doeth things worthy of punishment, shall be beaten with few stripes. The apostle also says, "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law." (Rom. 2: 12.) The heathen, therefore, will perish without law, and be beaten with few stripes, because they obeyed not the light that was in them; but the penalty of the revealed law will not fully be executed upon them, and it will be more tolerable for them in the day of judgment, than for those who have sinned, having the law, and who are to be judged by the law, and have the sentence of the law executed upon them. Such, without repentance, will suffer eternal torment and everlasting banishment from the presence of God. And they will have weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

Having learned that man is convicted of sin by the law, let us next endeavor to ascertain what sins the present generation are guilty of, in order to learn whether they have any

need to repent. We will, for the present, pass over the sins of the heathens, and enumerate some of the evils existing among Christian nations where they have copies of the revealed law existing by millions, and where almost every family can read the sacred pages of the same. The Divine law says, "*Thou shalt not kill.*" Now it is not the individual who murders who is alone criminal, but all those who sanction the same. When the Saints were murdered in Missouri and Illinois by the marshaled hosts of the wicked, who were urged on by the highest authorities of those States, it is a notable fact that thousands of professed Christians, and many Christian ministers of different denominations, were directly engaged in those most wicked and horrid murders. When the great prophet of the Lord was taken unlawfully from his peaceful avocations, and torn from his family, and carried, with a number of others, into the mob camp, and was sentenced to be shot the next morning, who was it that sanctioned and urged on these diabolical deeds? We reply, that among the vast hosts of those who made no profession of religion, there were no less than SEVENTEEN preachers of different orders who were in this council, and most strenuously urged the cold-blooded murder of the prophet and his friends in the presence of their own families upon the public square. Have these preachers and the thousands of professors of religion who took such an active part in the foul murders of the Saints, been disfellowshipped by their brethren throughout the States? No, they are still, the most of them, retained in the respective churches to which they belonged. But were those who immediately participated in these bloody persecutions, the only ones guilty? Were there not hundreds of thousands in the United States and other Christian nations, who in their hearts sanctioned these things, and who still continue to sanction them? Yea, more, has not even the general government itself, indirectly sanctioned these whole-

sale murders and robberies, as has been most clearly manifested by their cold and unfeeling neglect, and their refusal to protect the Saints in the rights of American citizens, while dwelling in those rebellious States? Will the persons who committed these murders and shed the blood of the only prophets which God has sent to the earth for more than a thousand years, be the only ones condemned as murderers in the day of judgment? No. Every person who has in the least sanctioned these things will suffer with the murderers, unless they repent. The Saviour said that the blood of all the prophets which had been shed upon the earth, from the days of righteous Abel, until the blood of Zacharius, which was shed between the temple and the altar, should be required of that generation. Why? Because they sanctioned the murder of cotemporary prophets. The approbation, given to the murder of the prophet Zacharius and other prophets, sent directly to them, was just as wicked as though they had actually killed all the former ones. So likewise, God will require of this nation, and of every individual on the earth, who in the least sanctions the murder of Joseph the prophet, or any of the Saints, the blood of those holy men at their hands; and not only their blood, but the blood of every righteous person that has been shed upon the earth in any age, will be required at the hands of those among this generation who give countenance in their hearts to these wicked deeds. This, therefore, is one among the many sins which hundreds of thousands are guilty of, and of which they must most heartily repent, or else the blood of the prophets and the saints will ascend up to heaven against them, and in the great day of judgment, they will receive their portion, not only among hypocrites and unbelievers, but among murderers, whose deeds they have sanctioned.

Also, the revealed law says, "*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*" And we are informed that those who do this evil are to be punished with murder-

ers. The Lord says by the mouth of John the revelator, that "The fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Now when we examine the present state of the nations of Christendom, what do we find? We find them continually practicing these great evils so clearly and expressly forbidden in the law of God. In the city of New York alone, there are about twenty thousand public prostitutes, who procure their living by a constant violation of these divine laws. In the cities of Boston, Albany, Philadelphia, Baltimore, New Orleans, and scores of others that might be named, there are thousands of female prostitutes. Now these wretched and vile characters are supported by hundreds of thousands of the male population, who daily and hourly commit crimes sufficient to sink the nation to the lowest hell. In ancient times such iniquities brought swift judgment upon the whole people where they were allowed. For one such crime among the tribe of Benjamin, God commanded the other tribes to go to war with them; and the whole tribe, men, women, and children, were cut off, with the exception of a very few. Does God feel any different towards this sin now, from what he did then? Is he not unchangeable in regard to his abhorrence of sin? If so, what must be His feelings to look down and behold several hundred thousand adulterers, and adulteresses, and whoremongers in the American nation—a nation that boasts of her moral and Christian institutions, and refinements? How is it, that the heavens can withhold speedy and awful vengeance from the nation? Nothing but the few honest, sincere, and humble souls among them, prevents an entire overthrow and destruction. When these are gathered out, then will come the day of visitation, and of fierce wrath which has been held in reserve for a long time; then will he quickly wipe

away these enormous, wholesale evils with which this choice land has been, for a long period, most fearfully and dreadfully polluted. But this nation is not alone sunk down to the lowest depths of degradation and wickedness: other nations, calling themselves Christians, are equally guilty. In the city of London alone, there are about ninety thousand public female prostitutes, supported by several hundred thousand male prostitutes equally criminal. In Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and finally in all the large towns, tens of thousands get their daily and yearly living by the commission of this great crime. And what renders these evils still more abominable in the sight of God, is that they are constantly taking place in a land of Bibles, where millions of copies of the divine law are circulated in their midst, and where all have an opportunity of informing themselves of the denunciations of heaven against these iniquities. Again, when we cross over from Christian England to the European nations on the continent, the scenery is still worse, and too abominable to be named, or even thought of, in regard to the extent and magnitude of these filthy soul-destroying dens of pollutions. In many of these nations, their own statistics show, that above half the number of infants born are illegitimate. Only think of the extent of crime, when in one nation, comparatively small, from fifty to a hundred thousand illegitimate children are annually born, which is as it were only an index to the still greater amount of crime that does not render itself quite so apparent.

It is almost an astonishment that God should have permitted these nations to practice these great abominations for so many generations without utterly destroying them from the earth. And it is also an astonishment that he should condescend to send a prophet with a message to a generation so awfully corrupt and wicked as the present. They are not worthy of prophets, or apostles, or the Book of Mormon, but yet God has sent one of

the most glorious messages that ever reached the ears of mortals, to this very generation who are worthy of nothing but judgment: he has done this, not because many of them will receive it, but because he intends to pour out the vials of his wrath upon them; and he knows that the rejection of so great a message will more speedily ripen them for an entire overthrow and utter desolation; that his vineyard may no more be cumbered with such abominable trash. God very well knew, that this generation were too far gone in the wicked traditions of their fathers, and sunk too low in the depths of wickedness, to receive a prophet, or hearken to the voice of inspiration; but he knew that the rejection of prophets, and of the Book of Mormon, would leave them without the least excuse, when he should rise up to destroy and make a full end of wickedness.

Perhaps some may say that these great crimes are not approbated by the majority, and therefore the majority should not suffer for the doings of the minority. But we reply, if the majority do not approbate them, why do they not put a final stop to crimes of this nature? It is the majority that rule and make the laws of the land: why then, do not the majority, through their representatives, make laws for the utter abolishment of these crimes? They have the constitutional right, as well as the power, to make such laws and affix such penalties, as shall effectually demolish these criminal connections. The criminal code of our country pretends to be founded, in a great measure, upon the criminal code contained in the divine oracles. If laws are made against these crimes, why not affix to them the same penalties that the great Divine Law-Giver has ordained? Death to both the parties is the penalty of the Divine law. When this penalty was in force in ancient times, it was seldom that this crime was committed. Let the majority of the people in the several States and Territories, elect such legislators, as will affix the penalty of the divine law to the laws which

they enact against these crimes, and they will soon see a great reformation; and adulteries and criminal connections will become as rare as murders: every den of pollution throughout the land would be broken up: no female would, at the risk of her life, think of following a practice so criminal and vile: the constant practice of murder, would be no more dangerous than constant prostitution for a living. Such laws and such only, will prove an effectual remedy against this great crime which has so fearfully and extensively corrupted the nation. If the majority do not make laws to effectually remedy and abolish the crime, then these evils will, in the day of judgment, be answered upon their own heads, and they will be found guilty, for suffering crimes of such magnitude to prevail throughout the country, when it was within their own power to have legislated against them with that severity that would have swept them out of the land. The very fact that the majority do not make such laws, shows most clearly that they are guilty of approbating the evil, at least, in others, if not in themselves; therefore, in the sight of the Great Law-Giver, they are considered guilty of participating in the same crimes. If the minority would free themselves from the same condemnation, they must repent. But how must they repent? It is not within the power of the minority to elect legislators, therefore, how can they remedy this evil, even if they feel ever so much disposed? We reply, that they can repent of ever having cast a vote for the election of a legislator, that would not promise, before hand, that he would use every exertion to have such laws passed; and they can reform, by not being guilty, for the future, of using their influence and vote for the election of legislators who will not do their duty in this respect. This kind of repentance and reformation will save the majority from the condemnation that rests upon the minority; and without such repentance, the minority, as well as the majority, will be

considered, in the great judgment, as being guilty of participating in the same crimes. It was for like reasons, that God visited in judgment, the whole tribe of Benjamin and nearly extinguished them from the face of the earth. It was not because the whole tribe had been directly guilty of the crime, but because they refused to bring the few that were guilty to justice; therefore God held the majority, yes, even the whole tribe, with the exception of a very few, responsible for the wicked acts of the few individuals; and the same penalty of death that would have been inflicted only upon the few who were immediately guilty, was with equal justice inflicted upon the whole who refused to deliver up the criminals. So likewise, shall it be with this nation, unless they do away these abominations that are in their midst: God will denounce them as being equally guilty as those who commit these crimes: and he will inflict upon them the same penalty, that should have been inflicted upon the criminals; and he will cast them down to hell to dwell with such vile and abominable characters, because they did not destroy these crimes from the land.

The people of the United States are far more guilty in this one respect, than the people in other governments; for here, it is the people who make the laws, through the legislators of their own choosing, consequently the people are responsible, not only for the laws that are made, but for the neglect to make any laws that ought to be made. But in many other governments the people have no choice in the appointment of their law-givers; and if the law-making department make unjust laws, or refuse to make laws for the suppression of crime, the people cannot remedy the evil without revolutionizing their forms of government. In such cases the responsibility rests upon the individuals committing the crime, and upon the law-making department who do not by appropriate laws suppress it, and also upon all others who approbate the same, or do not protest against it.

The people of Utah are the only ones in this nation who have taken effectual measures (we will not say *to suppress*, for the word is entirely inapplicable to them,) but to *prevent* adulteries and criminal connections between the sexes. The punishment in that territory, for these crimes is **DEATH TO BOTH MALE AND FEMALE**. And this law is written on the hearts and printed in the thoughts of the whole people. Does not this righteous and just law have its desired effect upon them? Yes; it establishes virtue upon a permanent foundation, and deals out justice to the vile seducer, adulterer and whoremonger, so far as it can be dealt out in this life; it preserves the purity of the morals of the whole population, which is essentially necessary to the peace, happiness, and prosperity of any people, government, or nation. There, no houses of ill-fame, or public, or private prostitutes, can be found to corrupt society and pollute the land. There, no arch seducer is permitted to flatter the young and inexperienced female, till he has ruined his victim and left her an outcast from society. There, no vile adulterer can creep into families, and violate the sacred chastity of the marriage covenant. What prevents these evils? It is the righteousness of the people, and the righteousness of their laws; it is the love of virtue and the fear of punishment combined. This is the kind of repentance and reformation acceptable in the sight of God; it is to repent, not in word only, but in deed, and in truth, and in the enactment of just and equitable laws; and in the execution of these laws upon the transgressor. Repentance is not to ascend into a finely cushioned pulpit, and there whine over the wickedness of the people, without taking any effectual means to reform and suppress that wickedness. Repentance does not consist in merely pointing out the evil and professing to be very much grieved that it exists, but it consists in refraining from the evil, and pointing out the remedy by which it can be corrected, and applying that remedy

as far as possible, and teaching all others to apply it. Utah is an example; and the virtuous results of her wholesome and just laws should induce the States and other Territories to follow in the same virtuous track. Let them try it, and we will insure them a much more wholesome moral atmosphere; and the overflowing floods of prostitution will be assuaged, and the fountain will dry up, and the houses of ill-fame will be abolished; and these abominable evils will vanish away; and the American nation will become a virtuous people—an example for all other nations to follow; and God will repent of the evil which he intends to bring upon them; and his hand of judgment will be lightened, and his chastisements will not be so heavy upon them. But if they repent not, but permit these crimes to continue, the Lord will surely visit them, and will not spare, but will execute all his fierce wrath upon them, until they shall cease to be a nation before him; and they shall know that it is the Lord against whom they have sinned, and before whom their abominations have continually been practiced, in defiance of his laws, and of his holy and just indignation.

Among the various evils forbidden by the revealed law, is that of falsehood. God so detests this evil, that he has informed us, that whosoever

“loveth or maketh a lie shall have their part in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.” God is a God of truth, and cannot lie without violating the great perfections and attributes of his nature, which if he should do, his power and glory would cease, and other Beings who are filled with all the fullness of his attributes, would succeed in his place. But God knowing all things, and loving righteousness and truth with a perfect love, it is impossible for him to violate the great unchangeable principles of his nature. Now all those who are permitted to dwell in his presence, must love truth as he loves it, and be as stable and unchangeable in truth as he is. All who are otherwise, can by no means be permitted to dwell there, to disturb the peace, happiness, confidence, and truthfulness that reign universally in those pure and heavenly mansions. The devil was a liar from the beginning, and is the father of lies, and all those who are addicted to this evil, are his children, and will dwell with their father, and be miserable as he is miserable, and partake with him of all the bitterness of hell, and associate with liars, and deceivers, and every evil doer. Besides the lake of fire into which they are cast, they will make an additional hell of their own by their own demoniac and malicious passions.

(To be continued.)

CONTENTS:

Faith is the gift of God,.....	209
Questions and Answers,.....	212
Editorial.—Statistics of Utah—Sandwich Islands—China—San Bernardino, California—New Work—Millennial Star—Appointment,.....	216
Repentance,.....	281

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